

# Community-led regeneration of Zagori through the development of a sustainable transhumance tourism product

**Ecomuseum Zagori**  
(Greece, GR)

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**Geographical/territorial context:** Remote and mountainous, Zagori host numerous traditional stone villages and natural sites of splendid beauty, in a territory shaped by the nomadic pastoral lifestyle and the once flourishing arts and crafts. Zagori has been a popular tourism destination for nature lovers hosting the Vikos Aouos UGG with great tourism infrastructure.

**Strengths/assets:** The untouched natural landscape of pine forests, alpine lakes, gorges, rivers and rich wildlife, along with its well preserved traditional settlements, Zagori is an attractive and cherished tourism destination. Easily accessible with adequate tourism infrastructure and a well organized trails network has long been a must visit area for alternative and mountain tourists.

**Challenges:** We are facing continuous demographic issues, gradual abandonment, aging and increased natural threats such as wildfires. There is a lack of local products, and activities benefiting directly the local community, increasing its dependence to the high seasonality. The traditional practice of transhumance, the main economic activity for many families of breeders, is disappearing due to the total shift towards a services based economy, leading to further population and biodiversity loss and irreversible disappearance of the grasslands in the future.

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## Identified Stakeholders, Establishment of the Hub



Location: Ano Pedina Conference Hall, Zagori  
Municipal Conference Center, mainly inactive and occasionally used for local events  
Type of stakeholders involved : Local Cultural Associations & Local Community and Local Government representatives

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## Co-development of the Action Plan



The co-development of the action plan happened through the following workshops:

- ☒ **Participatory Workshop (18/10-21/10):** Around 50 participants took part in the plan presentation and brainstorming sessions
- ☒ **Roundtable with Stakeholders/Business Model Canvas (21/10):** Local community, shepherds and researchers assisted in the design of a cognitive map, a swot analysis, and a canvas board, defining the intervention logic of the regeneration plan.
- ☒ **Optional Workshop (23/12-26/12):** Participatory trails mapping workshop

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## Established Action Plan

The Regeneration Plan (RP) of the Ecomuseum seeks to raise local awareness on environmental sustainability and the role of tourism in utilizing local cultural and natural resources for local development. The plan focuses on creating additional value on the current practice of transhumance as a means of incentivizing local shepherds to remain active, whilst generating additional income through tourism. The RP is further tackling deterioration and abandonment of the territory, by encouraging young generations to get involved towards a locally perceived place branding strategy. According to the swot analysis conducted with the local community, the plan proposes transhumance as a new tourism product, and a repository of intangible heritage, memory and know-how. Taking into account that Zagori's culture has been shaped by mobile pastoral tribes, its rural landscape is interconnected by numerous trails networks, of important cultural value.

### Action 1: Identification & mapping of the pastoral trail networks

**Specific aim:** Collection of GeoData for the identification of a transhumance trail network, essential for the development of the EcoLoc mobile application for the navigation and interpretation of the routes. The digital map created will serve as a date pool of the transhumance routes depicting main landmarks.

#### Achieved Activities:

- Expand the map
- Produce Prints

### Action 2: Creation of a web-based mobile application

**Specific aim:** The mobile EcoLoc App for IOS and Android will permit the navigation, interpretation and remote accessibility to the transhumance trails. Through interactive maps hosting visual and acoustic materials will provide a holistic interpretation of biodiversity and the transhumance activity of the area.

#### Achieved Activities:

- Test App's user interface & Spatial & visual data insertion
- Market Release (pending)

### Action 3: Development of a transhumance tourism product package

**Specific aim:** A transhumance tourism product aims at filling a gap on the current tourism offer in the area. At the same time seeks to support financially local breeders and to incentivize younger generations maintain the remaining herds while setting a framework for the protection of rangelands.

#### Achieved Activities:

- Design of tourism packages & Dissemination and website release
- Identifying key stakeholders
- Legal status procedures

### Action 4: Filming of video-interviews of pastoral breeders

**Specific aim:** Safeguarding and displaying of intangible local know-how and heritage of transhumance through the voices of its practitioners for awareness raising and the archiving of living memory.

#### Achieved Activities:

- Interviews design, shooting schedule & montage and translation

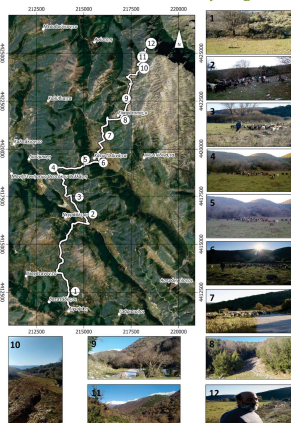
### Action 5: Design of the GTM plan and the transhumance product

**Specific aim:** To promote and sell the product via a social media campaign, banners, events, presentations in tourism boards and labs.

#### Achieved activities:

- Design of market distribution plan & Social media dissemination
- Pitching in tourism events and labs

### Transhumance Routes of Zagori



## Sustainability Beyond RURITAGE

RURITAGE has provided a framework for designing, developing and communicating more efficiently our action plan giving further credibility and recognition to our effort. The local community immediately embraced the project and agreed to support all related events.

How will you continue to work beyond the project timeline?

RURITAGE has been a lever for a systemic approach and strategic planning. The implementation phase under RURITAGE and UNESCO principals in extent, will define our future actions. The Ecomuseum aims at expanding the pilot actions developed through RURITAGE, by establishing a permanent transhumance trails network and by leading its protection, maintenance and sustainable tourism development including all local stakeholders on the process.

What are your main lessons learned from the project?

As replicators of role models, we have learned that every territory has its own strengths and development dynamics and "one size fits all" approaches do not work if not locally embedded. Beyond borders, rural societies deal with the same issues and the only way to tackle them is through empowerment and building of trust, by simplifying procedures and engaging all community levels.

What are the achievements identified from the project?

Being part of an international network under RURITAGE offers great potentials for future exchange of knowledge and externalization of our actions. The tools and methodologies of RURITAGE are an excellent toolkit for further actions and projects planning. Moreover, the chance to communicate and connect Zagori internationally as a sustainable destination adds value to all local efforts while connecting the local community with international parties.

What may be challenging in the future?

The main challenge remains the awareness of local community and governmental bodies towards the further establishment of transhumance tourism and the expansion of the pastoral routes under a legal protection framework in order to ensure its economic, social and environmental sustainability.